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AUTHOR Marshall, Catherine
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ABSTRACT

Women seeking education administration careers in the 1980's will find their employment opportunities limited by declining enrollments and unenforced affirmative action programs. The informal networks and sponsoring mechanisms aiding men's career mobility are generally unavailable to women. Universities can play a key role in developing pools of well-qualified women and helping school districts maximize their utilization in administration. Instead, women (and minorities) comprise only a tiny percentage of administrative positions. This paper explores the problems encountered by female and male graduate students at one education administration program. A survey eliciting background information on status, goals, and university and life experiences was mailed to 258 students enrolled in the program between 1976 and 1980; the return rate was 70 percent. Findings show considerable sex differences among participants in this program. Women were older, had less financial support and lower positions and career goals, experienced sex discrimination, and were often divorced. By ignoring these differences, education administration programs are failing to meet their women students' training, support, and socialization needs. Results suggest that professionals, professors, and practitioners must examine further the university's role in training and supporting women. Included are 24 references. (MLH)

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University Education Administration Programs and Sex Equity

Catherine Marshall

Vanderbilt University

Nashville, Tennessee

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University Education Administration

Programs and Sex Equity

Women who seek administrative careers in education during the 1980s will find opportunities for employment to be limited by declining enrollments and the lack of enforcement of affirmative action programs. Granovetter (1974) has shown the importance of informal networks for career building and when a sponsor mobility system[1] is the rule, the underrepresentation of women and minorities will continue (Marshall, 1979; Valverde, 1974; Ortiz, 1982; Turner, 1960). This paper questions the adequacy of university programs to fill the need for support and training for women seeking administrative careers.

The Research Problem

This research explores the problem of women entering graduate school in male sex-typed[2] fields in the context of the role of universities in promoting sex equity.

This research asks: Do women graduate students in education administration experience special difficulties? Are graduate programs making appropriate and substantive efforts to ease these difficulties? The questions are explored through a survey of students attending one graduate program in education administration.

Significance of the Research Problem

The implementation of affirmative action policies requires a pool of well-qualified women with university earned credentials and degrees, and the university can play a key role in helping school districts maximize human resources through greater utilization of women in administration.

Marshall (1979, 1981) identified university structures which tend to block or to facilitate women's career mobility in education administration. The need for programs to support, train, and qualify women to enter and move up in school

administration is substantiated by these glaring statistics: only 1% of superintendents; 6% of assistant, deputy and associate superintendents; 2% of high school principals; 3.5% of junior high school principals; and 21% of elementary school principals are women (AASA, 1975; Meskin, 1974; and Naastrom, 1976).

Griffiths, et al. (1965) and Valverde (1974) point out that demonstrating loyalty, gaining visibility and having a sponsor are the critical variables in the education administration career (not the university training, although university earned degrees and credentials are required). The salient socialization and mobility system for school administration is the informal sponsor-protégé relationship (Turner, 1960). Women have unequal access to this relationship since sponsors seek out protégés who have backgrounds similar to their own (Marshall, 1979; Ortiz, 1981; Valverde, 1974). Women who move into administrative careers have to devise their own socialization structures. They include working in community and professional associations, role modelling from women in other careers, creating support networks, creating visible symbols of separation from their previous normative reference groups--teachers and other women. As women are creating these replacements for sponsorship, some falter, lower their aspirations, or seek other careers. Some suffer from anxiety, illness or family disruption as they function in entry administrative positions (Marshall, 1979).

University education administration programs provide key credentials for career mobility and are populated by aspirants and candidates for upward mobility. Yet, Dias (1979) found that women's aspirations for career mobility in education administration decline as they acquire the competencies and begin the career. During this time, women are often enrolled in graduate school.

We know from previous research that women can perform competently as administrators. We know that school systems' organizational structure and socialization systems provide less opportunity for women's career mobility. It is now time to

study the university program as it affects women's career mobility. Does graduate work in education support and adequately train women preparing for administrative careers? To what extent does the university program create in educational leaders an awareness of sex discrimination? To what extent do these programs stimulate the willingness and ability to generate sex fairness in recruitment, promotion and curriculum?

Framework for the Research

Women students generally are much less likely than men to feel confident about their preparation for and ability to do graduate work (El-Khawas, 1980). Studies indicate that male faculty members tend to affirm male students more than female students (Montiero, 1980; Hochschild, 1975; Tidball, 1975; Hayman, 1977; and Speizer, 1981). Graduate women often report being discouraged, angered, or confused by subtle and overt verbal and nonverbal exclusion that indicates lower expectations from them (Duncan, 1976). Studies indicate that classroom interactions, required texts, examples given to illustrate points, and out-of-class interactions may devalue women students and reinforce stereotypes.

Even though more women are enrolling in education administration programs for doctorates and credentials, women graduates are more likely than men to enter careers other than public school administration (Stockard and Kempner, 1981; and Edson, 1980). Most education administration programs report little or no use of formal or informal recruiting procedures which reach out to help women find positions (Stockard and Kempner, 1981). Research and teaching assistantships, fellowships, awards and scholarship nominations have, in the past, been more frequently given to men (Patterson and Sells, 1973; Adler, 1976; Carnegie Commission, 1973). No recent studies have been conducted to see whether this has changed.

Only 2% of education professors are women (Webber, Feldman, and Pohling, 1981). Smaller numbers and lower positions signify that women professors are tokens, isolated, have little power and are in situations where career success is in jeopardy. This hardly makes them able to provide support for women students.

Critiques of organization theory and research on education-administrative and supervision texts have shown that they are based on research and assumptions that organizations are run by men and that management is an area where male-appropriate behaviors are preferred (Tietze and Shakeshaft, 1982). However, education administration programs seldom critique the theory and assumptions and the university incorporates the male dominance model (Stockard and Johnson, 1981). Women's centers and women's studies programs are seldom integrated into the graduate education programs.

Adkinson (1982) demonstrated that schools tend to adopt the easiest and most obvious solution to the sex equity thrusts. University education administration programs in fostering good relationships with school districts, may take a low-key approach to criticizing district employment, curricula, and program practices. University professors seldom participate in policy settings and little incentive exists for education administration programs to take the lead in changing schools to be sex-fair. Universities may support the solo woman to be hired by a district and will thus help the district to assert that they promote women.

In Marshall's (1979) exploratory work, women administrators indicated that course experiences that were especially helpful to their career adjustment were those which included simulation of administrative functions, organizational theory, provided anthropological/sociological approaches to administrative problems, and addressed the special problems of women entering administration. The university work also provided a visible symbol of expertise and separation from women and teachers--the doctorate. Several women benefited from sponsorship by university professors, counselors and foundation fellowships. However, many had experienced barriers in their university programs such as lack of financial support, conflict with family and women's roles, professors doubting their aspiration and commitment, and geographic distance from degree-granting programs.

What One Program Shows

This paper explores the issues in a graduate school of education offering an education administration degree including Masters, Ed.D. and Ph.D. and certification program in the years 1976 to 1980. The program maintained a close working relationship with suburban and urban school districts primarily through training their personnel. The program had 10 faculty, and the focus was more on training and service to schools than on research. During this time the program hired its first female assistant professor of education administration and the average enrollment in the education administration program was 250. In 1980, 71% of the recent Ph.D. aspirants and 63% of the Ed.D. aspirants were women. Fifteen percent of these were minorities. The average cost for courses was high: tuition for the typical Ed.D. program could cost $15,000.

Data for this study were obtained from a survey mailed to 258 students enrolled in the education administration program between 1976 and 1980. Return rate was 70%, approximately equal males and females. The survey was devised to elicit background information on status, goals, university and life experiences; 187 of them were returned with complete or mostly complete responses. The researcher conducted follow-up interviews with five students, three professors and two administrators in the program.

The male/female differences in background, support, career decisions, motivation and aspiration were substantial. Interviews confirmed the general sense of the findings (with limitations because data were self-reported by people who were under the stress of pursuing a doctorate).

Students' reports of their current income showed widely different trends by sex--24% of men and 76% of women reported incomes of less than $10,000.00; 35% of men and 65% of women reported incomes under $20,000.00. Of those who reported incomes over $30,000.00, 71% were men and 29% were women.

The majority of students (57%) financed their education by some combination of scholarship, employer-financing, loans and self-financing. This combination financing was used by males and females approximately equally. Of those who re-

reported that their entire program enrollment was self-financed, 60% were women and 40% were men. Of the small number whose education was totally employer-financed, 56% were women and 44% were men. The overall picture of financial support shows men having an advantage in large part because they have higher incomes while enrolled in graduate school. It is interesting to note that this occurs even though women students were, on the average, older than men students. Women were far more likely than men to enter the program before age thirty. However, the largest percentage of students were in their thirties, and of these 66% were male and 34% were female. Women were more likely than men to be enrolled in the program in their 40s, 50s and beyond.

The women's positions during enrollment were clustered at the bottom of the education organization hierarchies; more women were teachers and more men were line administrators. Males were much more likely to aspire to the top administrative line positions (assistant superintendent, principal and superintendent). More women than men aspired to staff and specialist positions. Women more than men expected their participation in the graduate program to enable them to get a different kind of job or a job in a different organization. Men were more likely than women to expect that the program would advance their careers in their present organization. A greater proportion of women sought the Ph.D. while men were over-represented in the Ed.D. program. Marital status differences were striking--70% of the women but only 30% of the men were single. Students sometimes reported in detail their perception of obstacles to their graduate study. The obstacles data show the following: (1) The most reported obstacle was financial; 49% of those reporting problems were female and 51% were male. (2) Of those reporting job interference, 47% were female and 53% were male. (3) Few reported family pressures as an obstacle; of these 33% were male and 77% were female. (4) The largest category chosen was "more than one reason" and included "program policies," "professors too busy," "unsuitable program." Responses to a question on discrimination showed that

no man saw that he was discriminated against because of sex--all of the perceived sex discrimination was against women.

In sum, the findings show considerable sex differences among the participants in this education administration program. The survey methodology in the research did not provide answers for questions about whether the program causes or exacerbates these differences. However, if the findings are viewed within the framework of related research and with the concern for meeting affirmative action needs, they suggest that similar education administration programs should reexamine their abilities to meet the needs of their women students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This particular education administration program had a different effect on women and on men. It showed important sex differences in the outcomes for students. When women are older, have less financial support, experience sex discrimination, have lower positions and lower career goals, are more likely to be divorced, and so on, there is the suggestion that the program selects, develops and supports students in a way that does not contribute to equal opportunity for its students. By accepting and training women students, without recognizing that they have lower income and lower positions and so have unequal access to sponsor-protégé socialization, programs fail to meet their women's training, support, and socialization needs.

The findings in this research suggest that education administration professionals, professors and practitioners must examine further the role of the university in supporting and providing appropriate training for women. Recognition that women <u>are</u> minorities in school administration should spur university programs to allocate more scholarship funds to women than to men and to analyze their recruitment and support structures, their curriculum, texts, and their

faculty to assess their impact on women. Restructuring so that the program will attract and support women would be costly. However, if university programs work toward equity, they will also be working toward quality, since decades of research show women's contributions to excellence as school administrators. Currently some talented and aspiring women experience barriers but, through self-help and special organizations, gain access to administrative positions. Many more experience barriers and lower their aspirations. We must use our expertise in organizational analysis on our own programs to re-design programs to achieve equity.

Footnotes

[1]Turner (1960) showed that the mobility system in education is sponsored, not contest, mobility. Therefore, when two individuals are competing for a position, the sponsored individual will get the position even if the other individual has better qualifications. Valverde (1974) pointed out that the sponsor-protégé mechanism has a built-in replication formula by which white males choose and promote protégés with the same backgrounds (cultural, ethnic, values, race, and sex) as their own.

[2]Male sex-typed is a concept defined by Merton (1964) as a career in which the incumbents are predominately male and there is an expectation that it should be that way. The statistics on women's participation in education administration nationally are detailed elsewhere (see Marshall and Ortiz especially, and Stockard and Kempner, 1981).

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